

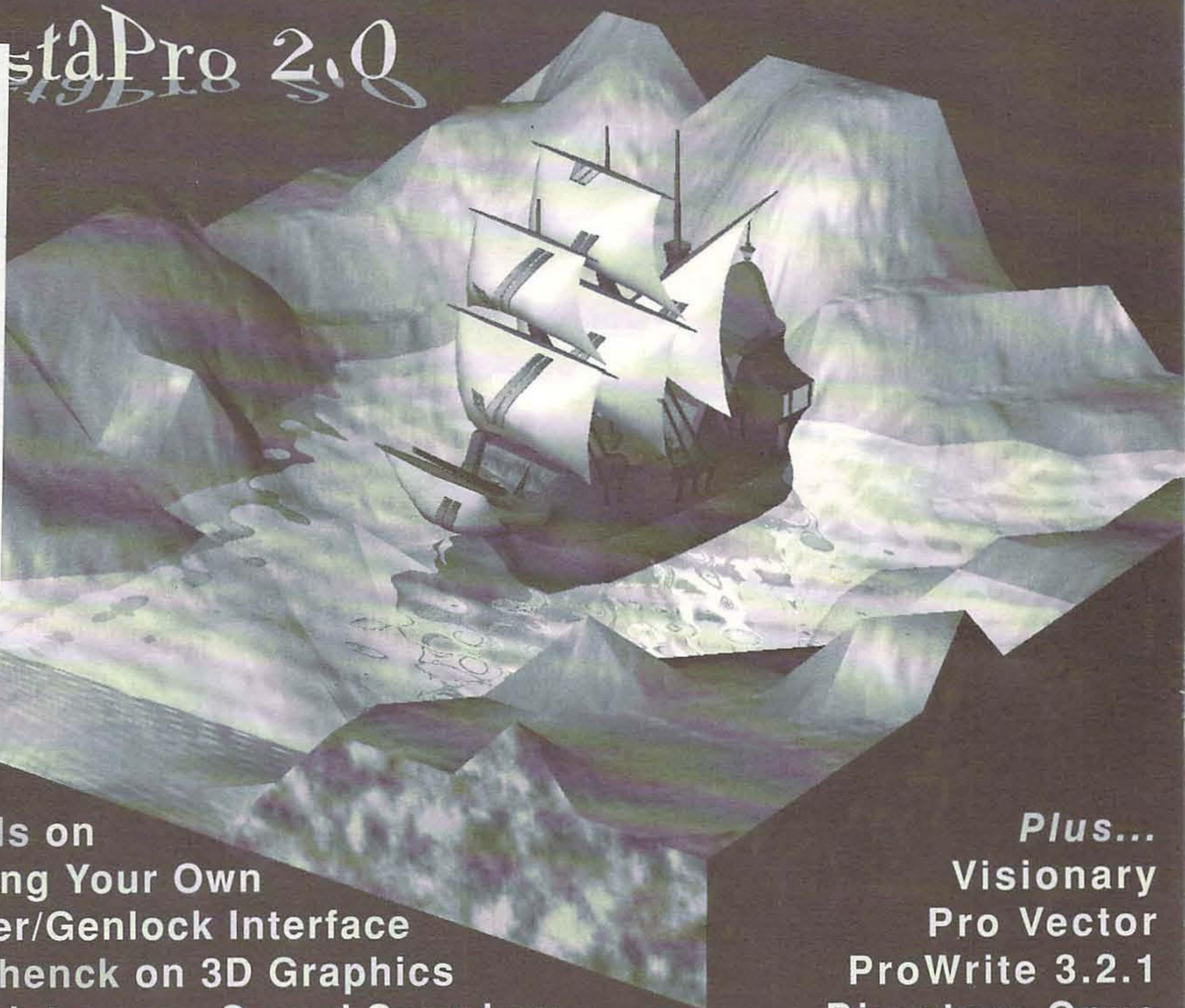
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**OJ Sands on  
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Brad Schenck on 3D Graphics  
Bob Lindstrom on Sound Samplers**

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**#47**

February 1992

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# .info WrapUp

## CYBERARTS '91

This was the second major conference on the digital arts sponsored by *Keyboard* and *Verbum* magazines. Unfortunately, it may also be the last, because of the down economy and subsequent low attendance by both exhibitors and the public. Compared to last year's extravaganza in downtown L.A., this year's, held at the Pasadena Center, was modest, but not lacking in new products and enthusiasm. And the lecture halls were typically packed throughout the three days.

Amiga products were more visible this year. Last year, there were perhaps eight Amigas present, with about as many DOS machines, a few minis, and a ton of Macs. This year there were very few DOS machines, a few workstations, and about a 3-to-1 mix of Mac IIs and Amigas. NewTek can doubtless take much of the credit for the increasing acceptance of the Amiga as a serious high-end digital arts tool by the avant-garde. NewTek was there in force, and when they gave their presentation, droves of attendees were turned away for lack of standing room.

Other Amiga exhibitors: *Mandala* was there; it has been upgraded to allow more than one person to interact simultaneously, and is available as a complete authoring package for \$499. A 3D project called *Dog Flight Simulator* attracted a fair amount of attention running on an '040 Amiga with wireless LCD shutter glasses. Richmond

Sound Design (the people who did the Amiga-controlled special effects system for Lily Tomlin's Broadway show *Search For Intelligent Life in the Universe*) showed their *Command/Cue* MIDI show control package, a lightning-quick Amiga system capable of simultaneously controlling thousands of MIDI events via a proprietary 32-bit parallel interface. The *Verbum* booth featured a Mac II running their excellent interactive CD-ROM *Verbum* magazine, which is soon to be ported to CDTV. This is a major breakthrough for the Amiga, as *Verbum* is widely considered the premier digital arts magazine.

At the SigGraph meeting held on Thursday night, Dr. David Warner of Loma Linda University discussed using computers with the neurologically impaired. His *BioMuse* system, developed at Stanford and demonstrated at last year's CyberArts, detects minute electrical impulses using a sensor headband. Dr. Warner says that it is running on the Amiga now, and in order to finance the project it will be introduced in the near future as an Amiga gaming system with a price of around \$150.

*VREAM* (Virtual Dream) is a \$1500 full virtual reality authoring system, with runtime modules for distribution. It allows creation of fully interactive 3D worlds, with device drivers for everything from mouse to joystick to Mattel *PowerGlove*. The next upgrade is supposed to offer multi-user capabilities such that a world might be distributed on an online network,

downloaded, and participated in by groups connected via modem. Available currently only for DOS-based machines, the author is planning ports to Mac, UNIX, and Amiga. (By the way: if you don't have a *PowerGlove*, Buy It Now! Mattel is dropping the product soon, but a lot of people are using the it in VR work because of the price. Impressive Virtual Reality will be available on the Amiga Real Soon Now, but if you don't have a *PowerGlove*, expect to navigate with a joystick or spend some big bucks!)

There was a lot more going on at the CyberArts Festival than this limited report could possibly cover. Interactive workshops were hot, and Amigas were used right alongside Mac IIs everywhere I looked, without any overt animosity. There was also a tremendous amount of personal networking going on everywhere. Even Electronic Arts had reps circulating to solicit suggestions for improving their software. A good time was virtually had by all.

-Phil Osborn

## HARMONI

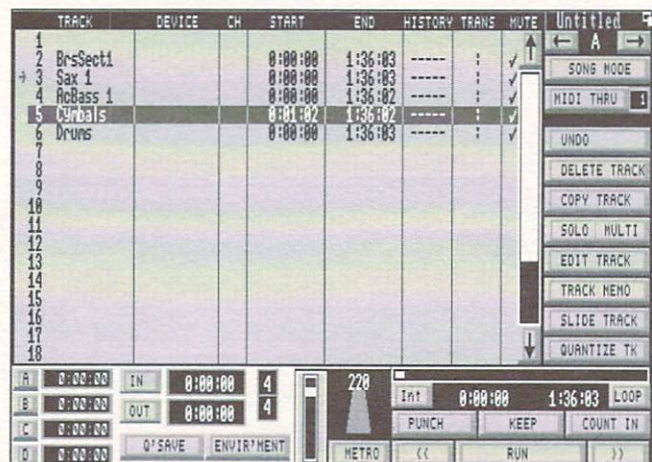
*Harmoni*, a Dr. T's KCS 'wanna-be' from The Disc Company, centers around MIDI event list editing, yet it lacks the graphic capabilities of Dr. T's *Tiger* module.

I found plenty of things against this entry-level sequencer, including dropped notes during recording, loss of sync when importing standard MIDI files, and widespread composing limits because sequences can only be played end to end and not simultaneously.

But *Harmoni* does one thing that no other Amiga sequencer allows: it permits you to locate and edit events according to SMPTE time code. Using a Min:Sec:Frame display, you may enter MIDI events at a precise real-time location.

Sad to say, adding a Tempo Change command in any track will relocate the times of all tracks and invalidate your real-time entries. So if you're creating a real time Foley or sound effects track, just be

A five-track sequence in *Harmoni*, from the Disc Company.





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sure to get all your music tempos in order first.

The *Harmoni* interface is often very slick. It's easy to identify and insert MIDI controller messages, for instance, from a menu of 'radio buttons.' And the user-friendly, introductory-level manual tries so hard to be non-threatening, it practically reaches out and gives you a reassuring pat on the tuchas.

The fatal flaw is that the interface is far too mousebound. The only way to edit MIDI numbers is to left-mouseclick the value and shove the mouse back and forth until you cycle into the number you need. So any *Harmoni* editing session feels like you're revving up a Hot Wheels.

Nonetheless, faults, large and small, aside, if you need SMPTE editing, *Harmoni* is the only real-time game in Amiga-town.

- Bob Lindstrom

## Harmoni



The Disc Company  
PO Box 67713  
Los Angeles CA 90067  
310-207-4008

## GETTING ORGANIZED

**D**isplay Systems International is shipping **Hard Disk Organizer**, a utility that provides you with programmable on-screen buttons which can be assigned a series of AmigaDOS commands. Up to eight commands can be assigned to each button, which can be created in any of ten colors so you can color-code your applications - games in purple, graphics programs in red, wordprocessors in blue, and so forth. Once you get the buttons set up the way you want and the necessary commands assigned to them, applications can be run with a single click of the appropriate button. *HDO* is Workbench 2.0 compatible and sells for \$44.95. 147 W. Main Street, Dayton, PA 16222. 814-257-8210. RS #210.

## SOUND SHAPING

**S**ound editing software seems to be the hot item in the Amiga market lately and *TTR Development* has a new title called **AudioLab**. It will let you work with true 16-bit samples, has MIDI in and out, an envelope generator, a built-in sampling interface, stereo mixer, graphic equalizer, and waveform generator.

There's also a Fourier analysis function for taking a closer look at what you've made. *AudioLab* claims to work with most digitizers and MIDI systems, and future upgrades will support new sound boards as they appear. \$69.95. 6701 Seybold Road, Suite 220, Madison, WI 53719. 608-277-8071. RS #211.

## BIBLE-WARE

**T**he latest in *EasyScript! Software's* Biblical series is **BibleScholar!**, a thorough concordance with contextual capabilities. Using a windowing system, the software provides logical operators (AND, OR, NOT) for text searches. Probably the most interesting feature is the ability to compare translations, including Hebrew and Greek transliterations. The results of searches can be clipped out and pulled into a wordprocessor. There are even maps provided. The basic package includes the concordance, topics, and the King James Version and sells for \$149.95. The New International Version, Greek, and Hebrew modules are \$79.95 each and future modules will include the New King James and New American Standard versions. 10006 Covington Drive, Huntsville, AL 35803. 205-881-6297. RS #214.

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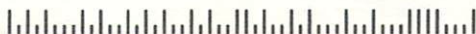
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